

HAMATEUR CHATTER

The Milwaukee Radio Amateurs Club

February 2010, Volume 18, Issue 2

One of the World's Oldest Continuously Active Radio Amateur Clubs—since 1917

Presidents Letter

READ THIS! In fact read everything in the Chatter. Michael, KC9CMT puts considerable effort into producing the Chatter each month. The format of the Chatter has changed and content of the Chatter has expanded under Michael's efforts. We use the Chatter to convey a number of different aspects of the club's operation and items of interest to hams in general (i.e., you!). Articles on everything from radio history to building projects get included under the "articles of interest" category. Another important use of the Chatter is to publish the minutes of both membership and board meetings. Reading these is important to understand what your club is doing and considering for future projects/direction of the club. If you want to understand what the club is doing and wish to influence the direction of the club you need to read the Chatter (and speak up).

It has become apparent at recent club meetings that many of those attending the meetings aren't reading the Chatter. This might mean that those attending the meeting feel that they will hear everything in the Chatter during the meeting. NOT TRUE. If the effort put into providing the Chatter isn't important to the membership we may consider dropping it and saving the time and effort involved for other tasks.

The fact many may not be reading the Chatter wasn't lost on one of our long time members. This member (who wishes to remain un-named) has provided us with some incentive "prizes" to 'motivate' the membership to read the Chatter. We will be working out a system to award prize(s) to meeting attendees that can demonstrate they've read the club newsletter. The hope is we will get the membership at large to make a habit out of reading the Chatter. Come to the meeting to find out how this will work.

Speaking of 'when the Chatter arrives', it may start to show up in your inbox a bit differently. We currently attach the newsletter in .PDF format to an email delivered to your inbox.

Many clubs distribute a link via email that you click on to download the .PDF file. This has the advantage of not filling your inbox with a large .PDF file (using up your inbox storage). If you like keeping electronic copies of the Chatter, the new method will require you to save a copy of the .PDF file once it is downloaded (use File->Save or File-Save a Copy in Adobe Reader). Nothing is lost over the old system and it should work better for those with slower connections to the internet.

We would like to hear your opinions on the Chatter. If you aren't making it to meetings, please get on the Yahoo Group and comment. The Yahoo Group is the perfect forum to influence and comment on the club's activities and direction. A discussion on the Yahoo Group is a great method to get a consensus of the groups' feeling and thinking. We want this club to be what the membership wants. We just need to hear from you. The easiest way to get to the Yahoo Group if you don't have a bookmark is to go to the club web site at www.w9rh.org, click on Links on the left side of the screen and then on MRAC-W9RH Yahoo Group. Not signed up for the Yahoo Group? It's easy. We can send you an invite if you drop us an email at w9rh@arri.net. BTW, everyone should have received an invite (at least once) in the past.

The **FM SIMPLEX CONTEST** may be done and over by the time you receive this. The contest has been widely publicized locally with flyers, mailings, announcements on nets, info on the web site, in newsletters, and emails. We not only were listed in QST we received a mentioned in an article in QST that has generated some national attention. A few clubs have asked our permission to use our contest format verbatim or in a modified format. One club, Golden Empire DX Club - NB6B, ran their contest on Feb. 6th and was kind enough to report their results. See www.n6aj.com for pictures of their "Zipper" contest (instead of using grid squares, they used zip codes). My favorite picture is the operator working from a kayak! They ran their contest for 12 hours and had at least five rovers. The logs are still arriving for the Feb. 6th effort and they are planning another for October. Thanks to those involved on the FM Simplex Contest Committee and especially to Joe, N9UX for the contact and publicity in QST! We'll report on other clubs as we hear back from them.



MRAC Officers:

Terms Expiring in 2010

- President – Mark, AB9CD
- V-President-Brian, K9LCQ
- Secretary – Mike, KC9CMT
- Treasurer – Vacant
- Director – Dave, WB9BWP
- Director – Dave, KA9WXN

Terms Expiring in 2011

- Director – Al, KC9IJJ
- Director – Hal, KB9OZN
- Director – Dwain, KC9MJJ

The Club Phone Number is: (414) 332-MRAC or

(414) 332- 6 7 2 2

Visit our website at:

www.w9rh.org

Mail correspondence to:

M. R. A. C.

P.O. Box 240545

Milwaukee, WI 53223

PROGRAMS. It seems one of the most popular activities of the MRAC are the monthly meeting programs. This month's program is Big Antennas by Dick Wood, W9JBE. As I have admitted at meetings, I've gotten three months of club program promotion for this one. Our first scheduled date for the program was struck down by a delayed flight (a story in itself). I then mistakenly announced this program would be done the following month. My confusion on the date got everyone ready for the program a second time. I promise I'm not fooling this time. Unless forces beyond our control... we will have the program this month.

Speaking of programs, in the last year we have been lucky enough to have a few programs that have been so good they caused us to skip the business portion of our membership meeting. I consider this a GOOD thing. Our program on mobile operation with the added presentation by our visitor from Norway comes to mind. Our meeting last month by Todd, KC9BQA on simplex operation was another. We received a number of positive comments (and no negatives) on Todd's presentation. As important as the membership feedback is Todd was impressed by the interest and questions from our group. Kudos to all involved.

We are always looking for program topics. Suggesting a topic won't make you responsible for doing the presentation. Of course, we always like it when the topic suggested includes a recommendation for a knowledgeable presenter. At the moment our next available meeting date needing a program is September.

After our Big Antennas program this month we have an interesting program (and planned live demonstration) about LoTW (Logbook of The World) to be presented by Brian K9WIS. This program will introduce you to LoTW and will give you everything you need to get started and use LoTW.

REMEMBER the program for April will be by YOU! The April program will be a 'Show & Tell' session. Everyone should bring a favorite "toy" (or not so favorite) to present to the group. We want you to share in 5 minutes (+/- 3 dB) your experience with some piece of equipment, software, operating technique, project.. what ever... in an effort to spread experience and knowledge to everyone in the club. I know there are many of you that have experience we might not ever hear about at a regular meeting. The format of this program is intended to change that. Don't be shy about recommending another member share something you know they are involved with that the rest of us that are not. Sometimes the things we do in the hobby are 2nd nature but may not be to the rest of us. I hope to have a couple of meetings each year done in this format with the hope we increase the exchange of information and different interests in this great hobby.

ELECTIONS are approaching. We have set up a nomination committee (Michael KC9CMT and Dave KA9WXN). The board will be discussing the problem of getting a fully staffed board following the special election last May. This may include changes to the bylaws to change the structure of the board. Did you know that way back in the beginning of the club the membership voted for a group officers and the group subsequently met and divided the duties of President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary between them? We may consider something along these lines again. Stay tuned. Changes like these require bylaw changes, which require the approval of the membership and a special meeting to be called. The May election meeting by definition is always one of these "special" meetings. As a reminder for those that didn't read the newsletter last month, our vacancy for Treasurer will be filled by yours truly (with the resulting opening in the President's position) if we can't fill this spot with someone by May. It seems the Treasurer's position is viewed as too difficult. I'll let you in on a secret. We keep our books using accounting software and our roster in Excel. Simple computer work anyone can do!

MISCELLANEOUS. There is some work to running this organization you should know about. We renewed our liability insurance at a lower rate than last year (same as two years ago). This insurance allows us to hold public events like Field Day. Of course we have no FD planned for 2010 because we haven't had a volunteer to organize the FD effort. If nothing changes MRAC will miss participating in FD for the first time in history. Anyone?

We also renewed our club call sign license (W9RH) that we use for both our repeater and at FD. This once every ten year task was interesting. You can't just go on the FCC web site and renew a club call sign. Club call signs are different than vanity call signs. There are three designated VECs (and MRAC VEC is not one of them) that can process club call signs. W4VEC is one of them. (Can you guess the other two?) An interesting note to this effort is that through the MRAC VEC we have a connection to W4VEC. One of the MRAC VEs is connected to the Great Lakes Navel base. He wanted to make testing available on base to military personnel. He researched the VECs and chose W4VEC to establish a testing team (MRAC VEC doesn't sponsor remote test teams). Since every VEC session needs 3 VEs and the staff on base isn't always available to meet this requirement, a couple of VEs from the MRAC VEC have gotten accredited by W4VEC to assist with testing on the base. Through these connections, the favor was returned by W4VEC in processing our club license renewal at no charge. Our license is now good until 2020! Sometimes it is all about the connections.

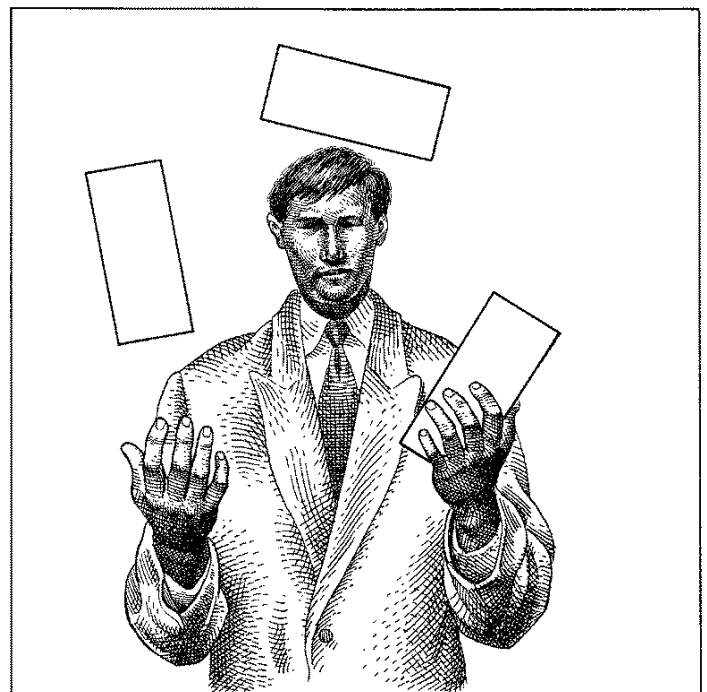
We have submitted our State of Wisconsin Annual Report. As a Non-stock Not-For-Profit Corporation we must file with the state each year. Our filing nets the state a \$10 filing fee. Such a deal.

We received a free ticket from the Starved Rock Radio Club in Princeton IL. Check your schedule for Sunday June 6th, 2010. We'll make this a prize at this or a future meeting.

This was a long President's letter this month. Plenty of material to remember for that prize offering.

Remember, this is YOUR club and IS what you make it. As always, I would like to know what you think about anything in this column or about the club in general.

Mark AB9CD



Board of Director's Meeting Minutes

Meeting called to order at 7:02 PM.

Present: Dave, KA9WXN Mark, AB9CD, Dwain, KC9MJJ, Dave DeFebo, WB9BWP, AL, KC9IJJ, Michael, KC9CMT. Excused were: Brian, K9ICQ & Hal, KB9OZN.

Secretary report read by Mark, AB9CD. Motion to accept Meeting Minutes as read. Motion made by Dwain KC9MJJ. Second by AL, KC9IJJ. Accepted by a vote of 6-0

Treasurer computer off-line, so no Treasurers report this Meeting.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS:

Correct Hal's Call sign in Chatter. Letter drafted and presented for comments; to be sent to former members for recruitment back into club.

Silent Key report: KA9AAB passed away 7-14 days ago.

Insurance Policy arrived in P.O. Box. Shows 90+ members. Mark changed numbers and sent back for new quote. This is liability insurance policy for club. Marsh Insurance.

Repeater Report:

Repeater reported to be running fine.

Rain Report progress: No progress until 2010.

Old Business:

Sound System: No progress to report. This will be investigated with donation to church early in 2010.

Club DVD's: Dave DeFebo states that he has enough for now. Costs will be reimbursed by club. DVD's will be for sale at a nominal charge at all events tabled by the Club. Can be given free to prospective new members as a recruiting tool.

Post Holiday Party Report: K9ZZZ offered Legion post in Germantown, \$100 rental cost. No decision yet made. Need a minimum of 25 people to rent at Meyer's. December 6th date set for 2010.

Programs:

February: Big Antennas, Dick Wood

March: Log Book of the World Program.

April: Show & Tell Night. Fix ups Etc.. Projects or New Purchases from the Membership.

May: Elections and the annual Auction. Hosted by Dave DeFebo.

New Business:

Swapfest table: MRAC will purchase a table at the MRC swapfest. KC9IJJ to obtain table ticket.

Election Nomination Committee: Michael, KC9CMT to chair election polling committee, Dave Shank, KA9WXN will assist.

The Chatter: Instead of Email Attachments in 2010, perhaps send Email link to Yahoo Group chatter posting. Link to chatter will be announced during membership meeting.

Send second & third notice of renewal to all former members.

Club Project: Search for project that membership can work on and discuss during meetings.

Volunteers: In immediate need of a volunteer to step forward and act as Field Day Captain. Need volunteers for group activities such as Field day, AES Superfest table staffing etc..

Field Day: Still looking for Field day Captain. FD Captain will be given time at each club meeting to discuss and coordinate FD activities. Pioneer Village needs to be informed by the end of February. Donation to Pioneer village needs to be sent to retain storage space in depot basement.

Swapfest Discussions: Outdoor fests are preferred due to state smoking regulations. Good revenue generating function for club. More discussion during next Board Meeting.

Dues Restructuring: Must be paid member to vote in May election. Idea of pro-rated dues discussed. Collect all the dues at one time is best for club. Discussed, New members that pay after May membership meeting will be considered members for following year. More discussion needed.

Change in By-Laws: President of board of directors will be responsible for assigning MRAC Officers duties to members of Board. Discussion tabled for this month. Proposal made by Dave DeFebo, WB9BWP.

Tek Scope donations to club. One tek scope will be brought to each meeting until supply exhausted.

Motion to adjourn at 8:42 PM. Motion made by Dwain, KC9MJJ Second by AL, KC9IJJ. Passed 6-0.

Room returned to condition as found upon arrival.

Respectfully submitted,
Michael, KC9CMT



Membership Meeting Minutes

General Membership assembly called at 7:04pm.

Excellent program presented by Todd Sprankmann, KC9BQA on VHF/UHF simplex and weak signal work. Todd has been actively promoting weak signal work in SE Wisconsin for the past 1 1/2 years.

Weak signal or over the horizon signals can extent out to 100-200 miles. Best DX of 2010 so far was on January 16-17 from Western Iowa to CT. Most weak signal work is done on SSB with a Horizontally polarized antenna setup.

Six meters, the magic band peaks in May-June with a period of activity in Dec/Jan. E-skip conditions are much stronger in the summer.

Weak Signal gear: A Horizontal Yagi rotor driven is the most important aspect to consider. Low loss cable, such as LMR-400 being preferred by Todd. Todd uses a IC-736R for his rig. It has band modules such as 220 mhz.

Calling Frequencies: 223.500 FM on 1.25cm.

222 Tuesdays started in SE WI. Use 223.500 Fm Calling. 2 Meter: 144.150-144.270. 6 Meter: 50.125-50.200, mostly SSB. 70cm: 432.050-432.150. 1.25cm: 222.070-222.130 SSB. Antenna designs and articles on design by Todd and others:

www.Kc9bqz.com/?=1689

www.BadgerContesters.org

www.Kcvhfgridbandits.com

Discussion of weak signal work by Todd was excellent and extended beyond the allotted time frame. As such; no membership meeting was held in January. Membership minutes from November and January will be read in February.

Reported that KC9IIV and Verne Teske were in the Hospital. Still need people to attend breakfast at Maxim's on Saturday mornings.

Meeting adjourned at 9:19pm. Raffle to commence after meeting program.

February Program:

Dick Wood on "Big Antenna's".

Next Regular Meeting

The next meeting will be February 25th at 7:00PM. We meet in the Fellowship Hall of Redemption Lutheran Church, 4057 N Mayfair Road. Use the south entrance.

Please do not call the church for information!

Club Nets & Breakfast

Please check in to our nets on Friday evenings.

Our ten meter SSB net is at **8:30 p.m. at 28.490 MHz USB.**

Our two meter FM net follows at 9:00 p.m. on our repeater at

145.390 MHz with a minus offset and a **PL of 127.3 Hz.**

Join us for Saturday morning breakfast at **Maxim's Restaurant, 18025 W. Capitol Dr.** We usually meet at around 8:00 a.m., and order around 8:15 a.m. The food and the company are good and;

You don't have to be a member of the club to join us!

Visit our website at: www.w9rh.org

Or phone (414) 332-MRAC or 332 - 6722

Chatter Deadline

The **DEADLINE** for items to be published in the **Chatter** is the 15th of each month. If you have anything (announcements, stories, articles, photos, projects) for the 'Chatter, please get it to me before then.

You may contact me or Submit articles and materials by e-mail at: Kc9cmt@earthlink.net

or by Post at:

Michael B. Harris

807 Nicholson RD

South Milwaukee, WI 53172-1447

**Club Repeater,
145.390Mhz Minus Offset
(127.3 PL)**

EASY QRP TRANSMITTER

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amateur radio license required to operate on the air!



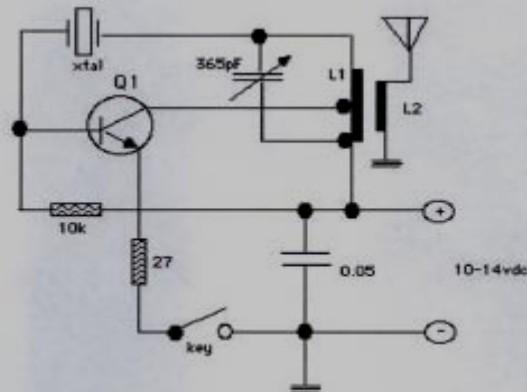
500mW CW TRANSMITTER

Cost estimate: \$10

A **very** quick and easy way to get on the air is to build a "Michigan Mighty Mite" CW transmitter for 160, 80, 40 or 30 meters originated by Ed Knoll, W3FQJ and developed by Tom Jurgens, KY8I. It can't get simpler than this! I made my very first QSOs with a 40-meter version (photo). It has very few

parts, costs almost nothing, and **it works!**

Output power is about 500 milliwatts with a 12-volt power supply. To operate, attach 50-ohm dummy load or appropriate 50-ohm antenna (do yourself a favor and use a [half-wave dipole antenna](#) to avoid tuners and assure good results) and ground, insert crystal and close the key. Adjust the variable capacitor for the cleanest signal that has the most power (compromise). That's it! You're on the air, and can confirm that it's working with [field strength meter](#). Power output can be figured with a common multimeter by using a very simple [wattmeter](#) circuit.



Q1:

2N3053, 2N2222, SK3265 or similar inexpensive general-purpose NPN transistor. I use a plastic-case transistor that came in a bargain-pack from Radio Shack - works fine. Use heat sink - try an alligator clip if you don't have a heat sink handy.

TANK COIL:

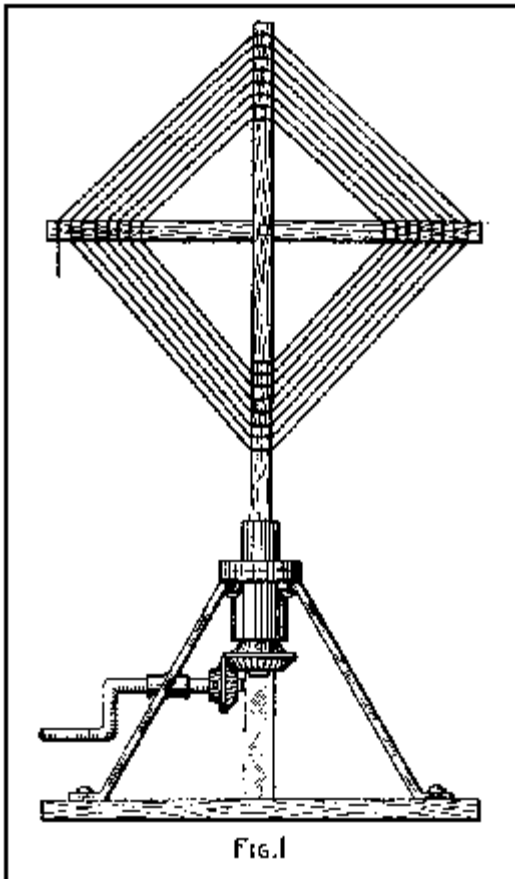
use a 1.25" diameter form (35mm film canister, pill bottle, etc.) and #20 - #22 AWG enameled ("magnet") wire. To make tap, wind L1 to the "tapped at" number of turns (see table below). Make a loop about 1 inch long, twist it a few times and finish winding. Sand the insulation off the end of the loop. This is your tap. After winding L1, wrap it with a thin layer of masking tape and wind L2 on top of the tape **in the same direction** as L1. Secure L2 with more tape and finish by sanding insulation off remaining leads.

L1:	L2:
(primary/collector windings)	(secondary/antenna windings)
160m--60 turns, tapped at 20	160m-- 8 turns
80m--45 turns, tapped at 15	80m---6 turns
40m--21 turns, tapped at 7	40m---4 turns

Radio Amateur News, September, 1919, pages 104, 141:

Guarding the Ether During the War

By P. H. BOUCHERON



The New and Valuable Aid to Navigation, the Radio Compass Played an Important Part in the Rounding Up of Illegal Radio Activity.

FEW persons realize that from April 3, 1917, until November

11, 1918, Naval radio operators, especially trained for this work were constantly on watch at listening-in stations erected in various parts of the United States for the purpose of carefully listening to all radio activity, and all signals which could not be readily identified by Naval communication experts as the official transmission of Allied radio stations were immediately investigated and traced to their source of origin. In fact a regular department was established which worked in cooperation with all United States Naval radio stations in the country. Operators at the listening-in stations soon became experienced in recognizing allied from enemy radio transmission. *In order to effectively censor all signals, these listening-in stations covered a receiving range of as much as 6,000 miles and a tuning*

range of from 50 to 50,000 meters, several operators being required to cover various sections of these wave lengths simultaneously.

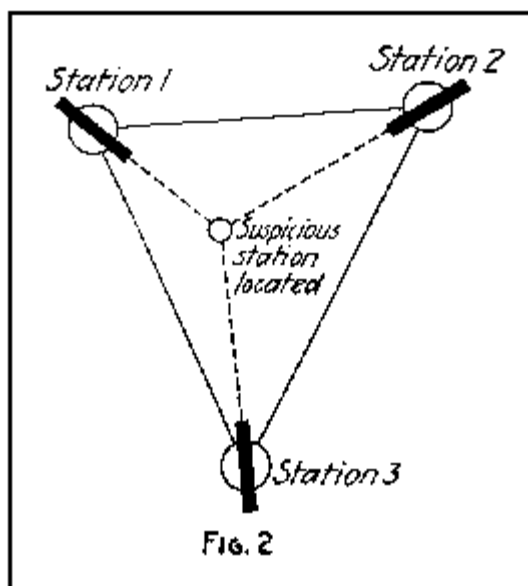
That new and valuable aid to navigation--the Radio Compass shown in figure 1--played an important part in this work of investigating illegal radio activity; in fact, it was owing to the timely necessity of having a reliable means of ascertaining the direction of strange signals that the Navy Department developed the radio compass to its present stage of efficiency. The manner of operation was simple. As soon as a listening-in operator became suspicious of a certain signal or spark, he immediately communicated the fact to the radio compass operators stationed at various points of the district in such locations as to form a triangle, and they in turn secured the approximate location of the suspicious signal by plotting a point at the line of intersection resulting from the three different directions secured by each of the three radio compass operators forming the triangle.

After having ascertained the approximated position of a strange or suspicious signal, Naval investigators would immediately reach the spot in fast automobiles. It must be understood, however, that very few radio compass directions are ever secured so accurate as to give the exact spot from which signals emanate, but it does give the location within a mile. It is then a comparatively easy matter to search the particular neighborhood given by the direction finder and investigate any suspicious-looking overhead wires which might be employed for transmission.

It is surprising to what lengths young men of a playful turn of mind went in using substitute antenna; some of these were unused telephone wires, clothes-lines where the rope had been substituted with flexible stranded wire, insulated iron fence, chicken netting, etc. In this connection it may be said that after the executive order had been sent out by the authorities instructing all amateurs and private owners to dismantle their radio apparatus and store them away, many, being of a perverse turn of mind, attempted to see for themselves just how far the Government officials were prepared to locate those who had failed to comply with instructions *by persisting in sending to each other, using prearranged call letters not known to anyone else, or, as was detected in one case, simply sending out unintelligible signals.* Much to their surprise, however, they were soon located by the investigators, who, in the case of New York State, would be on the spot in a very short time, and having discovered them would confiscate their complete installations as well as give them a good scare, inferring what might befall them and their friends were they ever heard from again by radio until after the cessation of hostilities. While some of these boys did not exactly act as all law-abiding citizens should, their number was very small indeed as compared to the large body of amateurs in the country.

Under these circumstances, and by giving wide publicity in the press to the cases detected, it was comparatively a short time before all radio stations not under the direct supervision of the Army or Navy had been effectively dismantled and closed for the duration of the war. Running down receiving stations, however, was not so easily accomplished since there was little external evidence of anyone doing this, the only possible clues being in the accidental discovery of secret antenna.

For a considerable period of time trained observers, *many of them former amateurs* who were familiar with the various tricks anyone



Three Receiving Stations Forming a Triangle Would Adjust Their Direction Finders for Maximum Strength and Immediately the Suspicious Station Was Located.

might resort to in order to keep their receiving station open and thereby copy all important cipher and plain language communications between allied stations, were constantly traveling about the country on the lookout for any indication of secret receiving or sending apparatus. *In this way, many innocent-looking telephone and telegraph wires were often found to lead to elaborate and very business-like receiving outfits.*

One interesting case in particular was that of two young electrical engineers living in an apartment house in the Bronx section of New York City, and who had cleverly installed an elaborate system of receiving antenna. These enterprising young men had erected a series of very fine enamel wires which circled two high apartment houses in such a manner as to be practically invisible. This was accomplished by installing the wire on small insulated tacks driven into the brick wall at the top of the roof and under the terra cotta cornices, making it impossible for anyone to detect it either outside or inside the roof.

Eventually the wire was accidentally discovered by an electrician who was repairing the electric bell system of the house. In leaning over the terra cotta railing of the roof, his hand unconsciously wandered under the railing where he had felt the wire, and upon investigating he discovered that it led to a window on the third floor. It happened that this electrician had a slight knowledge of radio telegraphy, and suspecting his find to be a secret radio installation he immediately reported the fact to the authorities. When the investigators walked into the apartment of the two young men they found a complete long-distance undamped receiving set employing three steps of application installed on a table and along with it an accurate log of the signals transmitted by European stations, including Eiffel Tower, France; Nauen, Germany, and Rome, Italy. Of course, these young men had no intention of making unlawful use of the information they were securing in this fashion, and merely were using the set for experimental purposes, at the same time probably exulting over the fact that they were "putting one over" on the authorities supervising radio activity. Had they not been able to furnish indisputable evidence of their citizenship, loyalty and character, things might have gone different with them, and they might have reflected over their lack of foresight while safely interned in a Southern internment camp.

It must be said in fairness to the amateurs in general, that incidents of willful and deliberate attempts to engage in illegal radio activities were small compared to that large body of men. As a matter of fact, the greater part of these young men immediately enlisted at the entry of the United States in the war, in either the Army or the Navy, to serve their country in the best way known to them, making use of the practice and experience gained while amateur radio operators.

The radio activities of German submarines which happened to be in the vicinity of the Atlantic Coast did not escape the attention of the authorities, and much valuable information was secured by actually intercepting and often discovering the system of communication the enemy submarines had devised in order to communicate with one another without detection.

One outstanding trick of the German submarine radio operators was to use low wave lengths alternating between 60 and 75 meters. Until this was discovered there was, of course, little chance of nearby vessels intercepting their messages, since the lowest wave lengths used by commercial vessels is about 500 meters. The submarines

were usually comparatively near to one another, and therefore could use such low waves with a very small amount of power; in fact, they often used high

frequency buzzers similar to those used for testing detectors. German high-power stations, such as Nauen (POZ) and Berlin (LP), knowing quite well that Allied Radio listening-in stations were constantly on watch copying all of their transmission, would camouflage their important transmission by *first sending out press items of the propaganda type on their regular and known wave lengths and simultaneously send their cipher dispatches on the same waves from a nearby antenna*, their receiving operators depending on a system of critical weeding out in order that the press items cause no interference. Another method was for the nearby station to drop down or step up to various prearranged waves and there send dispatches, probably inferring that allied operators in their desire to copy all items of the interesting (?) press would fail to cover other waves. Whatever their motives for these tactics, and if their intent was to decoy listening-in stations, these were crude methods indeed.

WISCONSIN Monthly ARES Section News

The ARRL encourages US amateurs to be aware of emergency operations on the following frequencies: 7.045 and 3.720 MHz (IARU Region 2 nets), 14.265, 7.265 and 3.977 MHz (SATERN nets), and 14.300 MHz (Intercontinental Assistance and Traffic Net); the International Radio Emergency Support Coalition (IRESC) is also active on EchoLink node 278173.

ARRL Media and Public Relations Manager Allen Pitts, W1AGP, stated "The ARRL has been in contact with communications leaders of the American Red Cross and Salvation Army, as well as other key Amateur Radio operators throughout the region. As teams from the hundreds of responding agencies worldwide are formed for deployment, many will have Amateur Radio components. ARRL is committed to providing communications aid to our served agencies and working with the international community in this time of crisis. At this time there are no known requests from agencies for amateurs to travel to Haiti, but this can change. If it develops that there are ARES assignments for a deployment in Haiti, these will be vetted and processed through each Section's Section Emergency Coordinators."

WISCONSIN Monthly ARES Section News Continued:

I wanted to be involved, but listened only, and did not transmit on any of the emergency frequencies as there was nothing I could contribute.

Actually, when you think about it, not transmitting is a de facto contribution. I did make a donation to Doctors Without Borders, and that made me feel part of the relief effort.

WXSpots

Last month's lead item is on Blacksburg, Virginia, SRD activity, Weather reports are generated on 2 meters, and especially on WXSpots. The WXSpots program has worked out to be a supreme system for us here in the Blacksburg CWA. I get all the reports, and then telephone them into the NWS Forecast office. The forecasters are very appreciative, and have actually changed their messages they send out to the media, based on what our people have reported in. When things are serious, and I can't get down my steep driveway, and therefore, can't get into the SKYWARN Desk itself at the NWS, I make periodic telephone calls into the office. And that system has been working well for us. -- Carter Craigie, N3AO, Blacksburg, Virginia SKYWARN

WXSpots is free software and can be found here <http://www.wxspots.com/>. It has seen significant enhancements since its original release. I have been a user. From its Web site: "WXSpots is free software that all responsible weather enthusiasts are welcome and encouraged to use. The software runs on your PC and connects to a server so that you can join our weather community. All observed reports of severe (and routine) weather are relayed to everyone connected. WXSpots will also connect to your home weather station and automatically report when you are experiencing strong winds. Reports can be screened by State, County or a list of Counties. The WXSpots community includes weather hobbyists, SKYWARN observers, meteorologists, meteorology students, and those interested in severe weather observations.

In addition to observed reports, WXSpots includes messaging features so that everyone can talk about the weather they are seeing, share links and information on forecasts and thoughts on future weather developments.

ARRL Weekly Newsletter Articles

THE DOCTOR IS IN: TUBES AND TUBE REPLACEMENTS

Rick Richardson, VE7WF, of New Westminster, British Columbia, recently has acquired some vintage vacuum tube-based equipment. He recalled that years ago, there was a product on the market -- Tubesters -- solid state replacements for vacuum tubes. He asked the ARRL's Doctor if anyone still manufactures such devices.

Here's what the Doctor had to say:

I do remember them, as well. If I recall, these were popular in the 1970s. To my knowledge, they are no longer available. You may find some on Internet auction sites from time to time. But before you go too far in that direction, I would think about what problem you are trying to solve. Old tube gear works very well with tubes, probably with better performance than "force fit" solid state replacements. In those days, many solid state receivers were quite vulnerable to overload and other problems, for example.

The nice thing is that most tubes are still available, often unused in original boxes and generally at similar prices to what they cost 50 years ago. An Internet search will turn up a number of places that sell tubes. I've always had good luck with Antique Electronic Supply <http://www.tubesandmore.com/>. If used within their ratings, tubes can last many years. I have WW2 vintage equipment that still works with some original tubes. I also have Drake tube based equipment from the period still going strong.

ARRL Lab Engineer Bob Allison, WB1GCM -- an amateur with years of dedicated experience with vintage gear -- notes that if the equipment has sat around for many years, the chances are the tubes are gassy. The glass part of a tube is not a perfect envelope. One molecule of air at a time leaks into the tube and after a few years, the performance degrades. If a tube hasn't been used in 20 or 30 years, it can appear to be totally dead. The trick to solve this is to let the radio run for a day or two. The filaments in the tubes will eventually burn away whatever air is inside and the tubes will often be back in good shape.

The only exception that I often make is to replace power rectifiers with plug-in solid state equivalents. I usually make my own, but they are also commercially available. My rationale is that rectifier tubes generate a lot of heat the old gear doesn't need. In addition, the filaments can draw 15 to 20 W and by removing that load from the power transformer it should stay cool and last longer. Unlike tubes, power transformers are not so easy to find. If needed, the original condition can be restored by unplugging the solid state unit and putting the tube back.

Thanks Doctor! Do you have a question or a problem? Send your questions via e-mail doctor@arrl.org or to "The Doctor," ARRL, 225 Main St, Newington, CT 06111.

Testing & Local Swapfests

VE Testing

Testing Session on February 27th, 9am-11am.

Amateur Electronic Supply 5720 W. Good Hope Rd. Milwaukee, WI 53223

No VE Testing in March!

Swapfests

Tri County Amateur Radio Club Swapfest Sunday, March 14th.

Jefferson County Fairgrounds, Activity Center

503 North Jackson Avenue

Jefferson, WI 53549

Working Committees

Field Day

- Open

FM Simplex Contest

- Joe – N9UX
- Sherm-KB9Q
- Mark-AB9CD

Ticket drum and drawing

- Tom – N9UFJ
- Jackie – No Call

Newsletter Editor

- Michael-KC9CMT

Webmaster

- Joe Schwartz—N9UX

Refreshments

- Michael – KC9CMT

Membership Information

The Hamateur Chatter is the newsletter of MRAC (Milwaukee Radio Amateurs' Club), a not for profit organization for the advancement of amateur radio and the maintenance of fraternalism and a high standard of conduct. MRAC Membership dues are \$17.00 per year and run on a calendar year starting January 1st. MRAC general membership meetings are normally held at 7:00PM the last Thursday of the month except for November when Thanksgiving falls on the last Thursday when the meeting moves forward 1 week to the 3rd Thursday and December, when the Christmas dinner takes the place of a regular meeting. Club Contact Information Our website address <http://www.w9rh.org>

Telephone (414) 332-MRAC (6722)

Address correspondence to:

MRAC PO Box 070695,

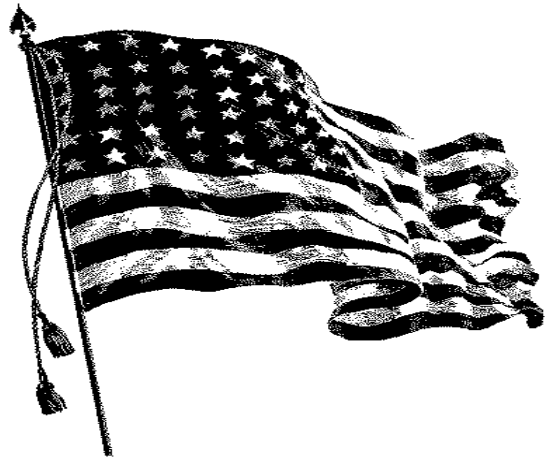
Milwaukee WI 53207-0695.

Email may be sent to

w9rh@arri.net

Our YAHOO newsgroup:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/MRAC-W9RH/>



CLUB NETS:

- Our Six Meter SSB net is Thursday at 8:00PM on 50.160 MHz USB
- Our Ten Meter SSB net is Friday at 8:00PM on 28.490 MHz $\pm$ 5 KHz USB.
- Our Two Meter FM net follows the Ten meter net at 9:00PM on our repeater at 145.390MHz - offset (PL 127.3)

Milwaukee Area Nets

Mon.8:00 PM 3.994 Tech Net

Thur. 8:00 PM 50.160, 6 mtr SSB Net

Mon.8:00 PM 146.865- ARES Walworth ARRL News Line

Thur. 9:00 PM 146.910 Computer Net

Mon.8:00 PM 146.445 Emergency Net

Fri. 8:30 PM 28.490 MRAC W9RH 10 mtr Net SSB

Mon.8:00 PM 146.865- ARES Net Walworth

Fri. 9:00 PM 145.390 W9RH 2 mtr. FM Net

Mon.8:45 PM 147.165- ARRL voice news (ARES)

Sat. 9:00 PM 146.910 Saturday Night Fun Net

Mon.9:00 PM 50.160 6 mtr .SSB NET

Sun 8:30 AM 3.985 QCWA (Chapter. 55) SSB Net

Mon.9:00 PM 147.165- ARES Net Waukesha-Milwaukee

Sun 9:00 AM 145.565 X-Country Simplex Group

Tue.9:00 AM 50.160 6 . Mtr 2nd Shifter's Net

Sun.10:00 AM 443.800+ FM-38 link to 146.88 Baraboo SWAP Net

Tue. 7:00 PM 145.130 MAARS Trivia Net

Sun 9:00 PM 146.910 Swap Net

Tue. 8:00 PM 7.035 A.F.A.R. (CW)

Sun 8:00 PM 146.910 Information Net

Wed. 8:00 PM 145.130 MAARS Amateur Radio Newsline

Sun.8:00 PM 28.365 10/10 International (Milwaukee Ch.) (SSB)

Wed. 9:00 PM 145.130 MAARS IRLP SwapNet

2 meter repeaters are offset by 600KHz - - 70 centimeter repeaters are offset by 5 MHz

SSB frequencies below 20 meters are LSB and for 20 mtrs and above are USB.

